

CORRECTIONS

Florida State University
College of Criminology and Criminal Justice
CJC 3010, Fall 2022 (Sections 3-5)

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Course description

This course is designed to provide students broad coverage of the key issues and emerging themes in scholarship on corrections, doing so with a focus on *incarceration* and the related issue of *prisoner reentry*. A key challenge facing modern-day correctional systems is this confluence of trends: (a) incarceration rates are quite high and inmates rarely serve life sentences, (b) more than 600,000 inmates therefore are released back into their communities each year, (c) the recidivism rates of these inmates are unusually high, and (d) keeping these inmates in prison isn't an option—their offenses don't call for life imprisonment; also, because state and federal budgets are heavily strained, expanding incarceration further is not an appealing policy option. The combination of these factors has prompted most experts to conclude that our current approach to corrections is unsustainable over the long-term.

With this in mind, this course will focus on the various issues, themes, and research findings to consider in charting an approach to corrections that prioritizes reentry concerns. The course is organized into three units.

I. The growth of U.S. incarceration. This unit explores the rise in incarceration rates that the U.S. has experienced in recent decades, with attention to the factors that may have explained this increase. This unit draws in large part from Travis Pratt's *Addicted to Incarceration*.

II. The incarceration experience and the rise of a criminology of reentry. This unit considers the circumstances of living in prison, drawing in large part from Victor Hassine's *Life Without Parole: Living in Prison Today*. Next, we transition to a discussion of reentry. Central to this is the idea that corrections must explicitly be centered on the idea that most prisoners *will reenter*.

III. Challenges and opportunities in the reentry experience. This unit provides a profile of the typical reentering offender and discusses the unique challenges that are faced in the reentry experience. This unit draws in large part from Bruce Western's book *Homeward: Life in the year after prison*. The unit concludes with coverage of the circumstances that often occur in cases of successful reentry.

Course format

This is a fully online course being taught asynchronously. There will never be an instance in which all students must “attend” at the same time—units of the course last 5 weeks, and during weeks in which assignments are due, students can submit anytime during the week. Each week begins on Monday with an announcement from me (but you’ll see that all deadlines are shown in the syllabus).

Course objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- ◆ Demonstrate their knowledge of the recent increase in U.S. incarceration rates and the key factors that gave rise to this shift in correctional policy.
- ◆ Demonstrate their knowledge regarding the circumstances and conditions that characterize life in prison and the emergence of a criminology of reentry that prioritizes reentry concerns.
- ◆ Demonstrate their knowledge of (1) the significant challenges faced by prisoners during the period of reentry and (2) the opportunities for and manifestations of “redemption” that seem to coincide with successful reentry.

Reading material

The reading for this course is critically important, and there will be lots of it. The assignments and exams will draw in very large part from the reading. Thus, the books are absolutely required, and doing well in the course will be impossible for a student who doesn’t do the reading well.

The reading comes from these sources:

- ◆ Pratt, Travis. 2018. *Addicted to Incarceration* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications. ISBN 9781544308050. [37241]

[There also is the 1st ed., with ISBN 9780761928324. Pratt has added new material to the 2nd edition—and that new material could be a part of our coverage in this unit—but the 1st edition likely will work fine.]

- ◆ Hassine, Victor. 2008. *Life Without Parole: Living in Prison Today* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press ISBN 9780199774050. [23270]

(The 4th ed.—published by Roxbury--also can be used).
- ◆ Western, Bruce. 2018. *Homeward: Life in the Year after Prison*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. ISBN: 978-0-87154-955-6 [37243]
- ◆ Additional articles/chapters that are provided as PDFs on the course website (these are used in each unit).

One key option on accessing the Pratt and Hassine books (my understanding is that this wasn't possible for the Western book):

This course participates in the Follett Access program (which is designed to provide students easier and less expensive access to books). You are automatically enrolled to receive your materials and will be charged through your FSU portal. If you would like to opt out or opt back in to receiving the discounted materials, visit the link below.

For more information, click [here](#) or contact the bookstore at follettaccess@fsu.edu
Opt Out/In Portal: <https://ACCESSPortal.follett.com:443/0208>

All student questions should be directed to follettaccess@fsu.edu

The sequence for each unit

The three units of the course will each be covered during a 5-week period. These units will use the following sequence:

- ◆ First week (reading): A “context statement” for this unit will be posted under “Files” on the Canvas site. This 2-3 page statement will (1) provide an overview of the topic being covered in this unit and (2) place the readings in the overall context of that topic. Students are to review this material and begin the reading assignments.
- ◆ 2nd week (discussion): Students will continue their reading, while also providing a post and reply for an online discussion question. This discussion question will be drawn from the 1st half of that unit’s reading assignments and will be posted on Canvas’s discussion board. Deadlines for posts and replies will always be 11:59 p.m. EST on the Sunday of discussion weeks.
- ◆ 3rd week (reading): Students will continue their reading.
- ◆ 4th week (discussion): Students will participate in the second discussion forum of this unit, with all the normal procedures and deadlines applying.

- ◆ 5th week (exam): Students will finish their reading and prepare for and take the 30 minute open-note/open-book unit exam that will be done within Canvas and must be completed by 11:59 p.m. ET on the Sunday of exam weeks.

Details regarding discussion postings

During discussion weeks, I will post a discussion question on Canvas's Discussion Board by 12:00 noon on Monday. You will be expected to offer an (1) original post and (2) a reply to another student's post. Both must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. ET on the Sunday of discussion weeks.

Original posts are expected to be approximately 3-4 paragraphs, but the most important issue will be content—your posting should (1) answer the question that was posed, (2) systematically incorporate relevant information from the reading assignments, and (3) be clear, organized, professional, and well-written. Also, to encourage an interesting and productive dialogue, I discourage you from waiting until the deadline to make your postings. This post will be worth 4 points (4=excellent, 3=good, 2=acceptable, 1=poor, 0=no post submitted).

In addition to your original post, you must also reply to at least one posting offered by another student. This reply also is expected to be informative and well-written, although it is not expected to be as lengthy as your original post. This reply post will be worth 1 point (1=satisfactory or above, 0=unsatisfactory).

Putting these two together, each discussion week produces a total of 5 possible points.

One key rule that that will govern this process: Discussion postings cannot be made up and late postings will not be accepted.

One other point: These discussion postings are meant to simulate in some way the normal discussion that might occur in a classroom. Their potential to be informative really depends on each student providing thoughtful, well-articulated responses, and then taking the time to read and consider the postings offered by other students. When this is done, these discussions can truly be an interesting part of the course. To assist with this, I will offer a wrap-up of each discussion that addresses some of the themes that emerged and offers some of my own views.

Details regarding exams

Exams will be completed within Canvas, using its quiz tool (more on that later). The exam will be available sometime on Monday-Tuesday of the test week, and then it must be completed by 11:59 p.m. ET on Sunday of that same week. The exam will

consist of 15 questions, with each worth 1 point. Once you start the exam, you must complete it, and you will have 30 minutes to do so.

I place no restrictions on your use of notes or the course readings. In other words, the tests are “open book” and “open note.” You cannot, however, gain assistance from or provide assistance to another student—your exam must reflect your independent effort. Communicating with other students about exam questions or answers during an exam week is prohibited and a violation of the academic honesty policy.

Also, as you will see, the time limit for the exam (which amounts to 2 minutes per question) guarantees that you will need to learn the material effectively prior to the exam. Learning the material as you take the exam simply won’t be possible—there won’t be enough time, and students who have tried that approach in the past have done poorly.

And last, at the beginning of each test week, I’ll provide directions that specify all the relevant details.

Grades

There are 75 possible points in the course:

30 points from discussions (5 points per discussion X 6 discussions)

45 points from unit exams (15 points per exam X 3 unit exams)

Your final grade will be based on your final average, with the below thresholds used to assign letter grades. Important point: There will be no rounding of grades (beyond that which is noted below).

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|------|--------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|
| A/A+ | 93.00-100.00 | B+ | 87.00-89.99 | C+ | 77.00-79.99 |
| A- | 90.00-92.99 | B | 83.00-86.99 | C | 73.00-76.99 |
| | | B- | 80.00-82.99 | C- | 70.00-72.99 |
| | | | | | |
| D+ | 67.00-69.99 | F | 59.99 or below | | |
| D | 63.00-66.99 | | | | |
| D- | 60.00-62.99 | | | | |

Course policies and other issues

1. Changes in the reading, schedule, or any other part of the course may occasionally be made. It is each student's responsibility to stay involved in the course and remain informed of any changes.
2. In any online discussions, be sure to communicate in ways that show respect to other students and viewpoints.
3. It is my expectation that all assignments will be turned in on time, and I do not anticipate accepting any late assignments. I therefore recommend that you stay on top of your assignments and avoid the practice of cramming right before a deadline. It is recognized, however, that in a very small number of instances, unavoidable emergencies occur that may warrant accepting a late assignment. Under such circumstances, you need to contact me as soon as possible to discuss your situation.
4. **University Attendance Policy:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.
5. **Academic Honor Policy:** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>).
6. **Academic Success:** Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Department of Student Support and Transitions to learn more.
7. **Americans with Disabilities Act:** Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all person with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services; and (2) request a letter from the Office of Accessibility Services to be sent to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and (3) meet (in person, via phone, email, skype, zoom, etc...) with each instructor to whom a letter of accommodation was sent to review approved accommodations. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For the latest version of this statement and more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University Tallahassee,
FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice) (850) 644-8504 (TDD)
oas@fsu.edu <https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas>

8. **Confidential Campus Resources:** Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

Victim Advocate Program
University Center A, Rm. 4100
(850) 644-7161
Available 24/7/365
Office Hours: M-F 8-5
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>

Counseling and Psychological Services
Askew Student Life Center, 2nd floor
942 Learning Way
(850) 644-8255
<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>

University Health Services
Health and Wellness Center
(850) 644-6230
<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>

9. **Free tutoring from FSU.** On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information,

visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options –see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

[see schedule below]

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Unit I. The growth of U.S. incarceration

Dates: Aug 22-Sep 25 (weeks 1-5 of the course)
Reading: The Sentencing Project. 2018. Trends in U.S. Corrections (PDF).
Pratt, Travis. 2018/2009. *Addicted to Incarceration*. (See the Unit I. Context Statement for suggestions about dividing up the reading).

***Sunday, Sep 4: Deadline for DQ1 posts and replies
***Sunday, Sep 18: Deadline for DQ2 posts and replies
***Sunday, Sep 25: Deadline for Exam 1 submission

Unit II. The incarceration experience and the rise of a criminology of reentry

Dates: Sep 26-Oct 30 (weeks 6-10 of the course)
Reading: Hassine, Victor. 2008. *Life Without Parole: Living in Prison Today*.
Kreager and Kruttschnitt (2018), "Inmate society in the era of mass incarceration"
Jonson and Cullen. 2015. "Prisoner reentry programs." *Crime and justice: A review of research*, 44, pp. 517-537 (PDF excerpt from article).
(Again, see the Unit II. Context Statement).

***Sunday, Oct 9: Deadline for DQ3 posts and replies
***Sunday, Oct 23: Deadline for DQ4 posts and replies
***Sunday, Oct 30: Deadline for Exam 2 submission

Unit III. Challenges and opportunities in the reentry experience

Dates: Oct 31-Dec 9 (weeks 11-15 of the course)
Reading: Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2018. *Update on prisoner recidivism* (PDF).
LeBel and Maruna. 2012. "Life on the outside: Transitioning from prison to the community," in *The Oxford Handbook of Sentencing and Corrections*.
Western, Bruce. 2018. *Homeward*.
Maruna. 2001. "Making good: The rhetoric of redemption," from *Making good* (PDF).
(And...Unit III. Context Statement).

***Sunday, Nov 13: Deadline for DQ5 posts and replies
***Sunday, Dec 4: Deadline for DQ6 posts and replies
***Sunday, Dec 9: Deadline for Exam 3 submission

